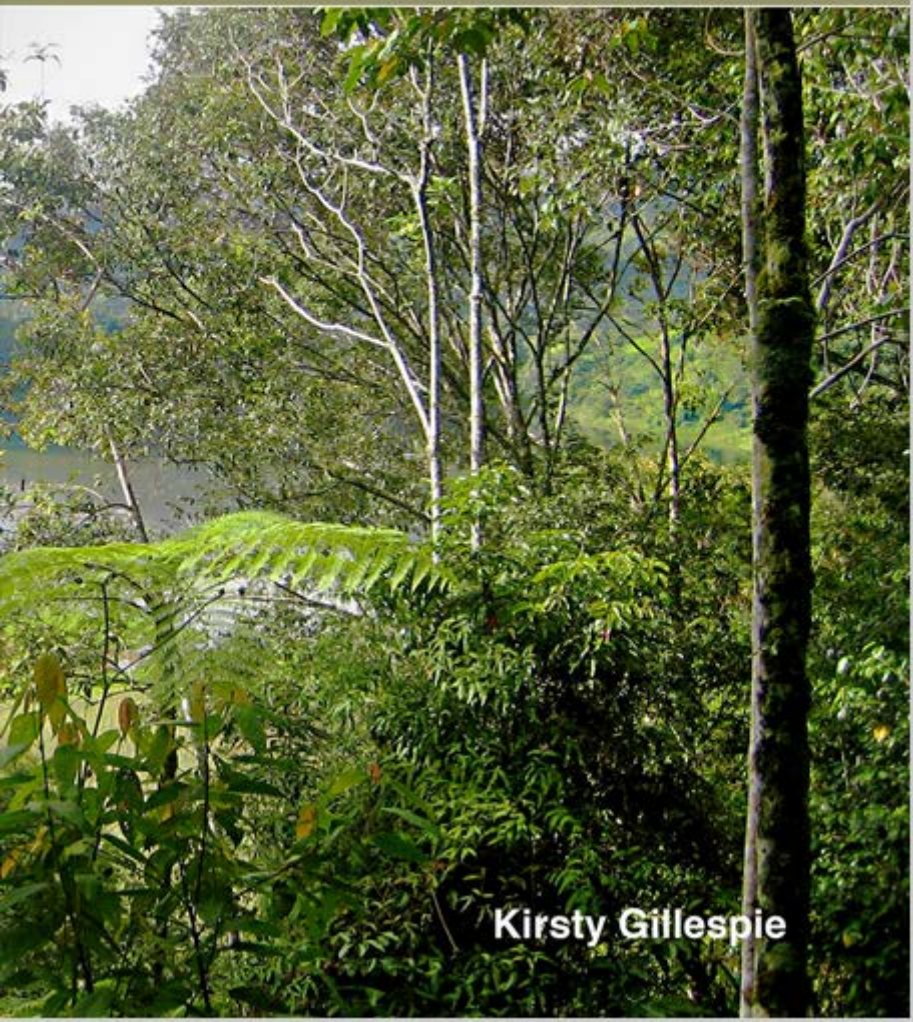


STEEP SLOPES

Music and change in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea



Kirsty Gillespie

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THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

E P R E S S



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This book is dedicated to the memory of

Wakili Akuri (1985 – 2005)

Sane Noma (early 1900s – 2006)

&

Richard Alo (1969 – 2007)

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1. Introduction

From time to time, when luck is on their side, ethnographers stumble onto culturally given ideas whose striking novelty and evident scope seem to cry out for thoughtful consideration beyond their accustomed boundaries. (Basso 1996:58)

This is the study of the musical practices of the Duna—a remote, rural community in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Inspired by the frequency and popularity of Western-style songs composed by the Duna people themselves, I began to research these compositions alongside the pre-contact genres that I had arrived in the region to study. Not long thereafter, I began to realise the similarities between this pre and post-contact music. This book aims to reveal those similarities, arguing for the existence of continuity in the Duna's seemingly disparate musical practices.

In this introductory chapter, I set out the aims of this book, the location and circumstance of the research and the need for such research due to the nature of the existing literature. I explain my theoretical orientation regarding the material I present and outline the methodology used to obtain and present this material. Finally, I give an outline of the structure of the book in its entirety, opening the door to the argument that follows.

Aims

It is important to state at the outset that this research does not take a salvage approach that would concern itself with the preservation of Duna musical forms perceived as 'dying out'. This view might be popular, particularly in non-academic discourse, however, it is far more valuable for research into a culture's musical practices to examine processes of change (Shiner 2003:155); indeed, the study of cultural change as a result of social change has become a demand of some disciplines, particularly anthropology (cf. Rumsey 2006a). In his groundbreaking monograph on ethnomusicology, Merriam (1964:9–10) wrote with much foresight that 'energy which is poured into lament for the inevitability of change is energy wasted...The preservation of contemporary music is undeniably important, but given the inevitability of change, it cannot be the only aim of ethnomusicology'. In accordance with these views, this book is concerned with processes of change surrounding musical practices.

The research was driven by several research questions. First, what aspects of Duna indigenous musical forms allow (or do not allow, as the case may be) the incorporation of new aspects arising from social change? Second, what forms of indigenous agency might be in place to maintain indigenous music alongside foreign music that exists in the Duna community? Third, what have been the reasons behind that community's embrace of non-indigenous music? To answer these questions, I needed to examine the music associated with both the pre-contact and the post-contact periods of history. This book does just that. Separating musical practices into these two halves, while seemingly easy, is, however, unnatural and defeats the argument for continuity before it has begun. An imperative for this book is therefore to deconstruct this dichotomy. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the knowledge of Duna culture more generally. After a Duna man, Richard Alo, co-presented with me at the twenty-ninth National Conference of the Musicological Society of Australia in September 2006, I asked him what he thought of the work of music researchers, this being his first formal exposure to such work. His response was very positive; with music, he said, 'you can learn very quickly about a culture. Everyone is happy to play and wants to share their music' (Richard Alo, Personal communication, 1 October 2006). This view is most optimistic, but the core belief remains: music is a very transparent and valuable way in which to understand a culture's world view. I maintain this belief throughout this book.

The geographical setting

Kopiago is a lake of unsurpassed beauty...It has pine-clad peninsulas, grass islands drifting with the breeze, clear water which on still days mirrors the hills around, ducks and other waterbirds, and an outlet waterfall which disappears into a hillside cave. The people[s]...houses perched on hills but their gardens came to the shore, and they trenched and dyked swamps to the north as well. (Gammage 1998:135)

The Duna are an ethno-linguistic group living in the remote north-western corner of the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea.¹ They do not live in villages but in hamlets dispersed across the area, and their livelihood is based on subsistence farming, with a very low average annual income of K20 (approximately A\$9) (Hanson et al. 2001:93). At present, the number of Duna speakers totals about 25 000 (Haley 2002a:11).

1 The Duna originally called themselves 'Yuna'; however, the term Duna, used by the neighbouring Huli people, was adopted in official documents and has now become a common term used by both Duna and non-Duna alike. I continue to use 'Duna' here to be consistent with other academic texts.



Figure 1.1 Map of Papua New Guinea, with circle indicating approximately the Duna-speaking area.

Courtesy of Don Niles



Figure 1.2 Map of Duna and neighbouring language areas.

Courtesy of Don Niles. Based on Haley (2002a:21)

The Strickland River is both a physical and a cultural border for the Duna, resulting in 'sporrán people east, penis gourd people west' (Gammage 1998:95). The administrative centre of the Duna-speaking area is Lake Kapiago and it is around this centre where I have conducted my research.

The Duna people's first encounter with the outside world occurred in 1934 when an Australian patrol led by Tom and Jack Fox travelled through the area prospecting for gold. This patrol was the first into the densely populated Highlands region, which had never before been known to the rest of the world (nor was the rest of the world known to it). First contact was acrimonious; while the Foxes themselves did not document any conflict and even went so far as to deny causing any deaths or violence, the indigenous people of the Highlands report otherwise (Allen and Frankel 1991:97–9). A subsequent patrol, in 1938–39, was led by Jim Taylor and funded by the Australian government. The aim was to map the area and to bring pacification—a '*pax Australiana*'—to relations with indigenous communities ahead of the arrival of an anticipated high number of prospectors lured by gold (Gammage 1998:11). On this second patrol, chaos and conflict were reported to have occurred (possibly exacerbated by the Duna's memory of the Fox patrol), which led the Duna to believe that 'the world was falling apart' (Gammage 1998:136)—a response typical in the region at this point of first contact (Schieffelin 1991:3; Stewart and Strathern 2002b:12–13).

The colonisation of the area by the Australian government in the late 1950s and the subsequent missionisation in the early 1960s led to major social changes for the Duna, indeed for the whole Highlands region, whose people have been described as experiencing 'a crash-course in modernity' (O'Hanlon 1993:10). Nicholas Modjeska (1982:50), one of the first anthropologists to work with the Duna, writes that '[b]y 1969 the pre-colonial superstructure of cultural and social relations was nearly unrecognisable after a decade of post-contact changes. Warfare had ceased and mission activities had effected a rapid replacement of tribal beliefs and rituals by Christian practices' (see also Strathern and Stewart 2004:128).

Independence for Papua New Guinea followed soon after, in 1975, and after this was granted, the colonisers began to depart. Similarly, the colonial missionaries also departed, after training Duna people to carry on their legacy. With the departure of these visitors came also a decline in some of the key services the Duna had begun to accept as part of the new order in their community, such as policing, education, medical services, food imports and road infrastructure. As a result, there is currently a strong sense of colonial nostalgia among many Duna, especially the older generations.

The Duna today on the whole describe their place as disadvantaged. Robinson writes (2002:148): 'Duna people feel that Kapiago lacks development, and that

nothing constructive has happened since independence.’ The handbooks on the area claim the same: ‘Overall, people in the Koroba-Lake Koping District are extremely disadvantaged relative to people in other districts of PNG’ (Hanson et al. 2001:102). Allen (2005) argues that ‘there have always been poor places in PNG’ and ‘the places poor now were poor before colonisation, before the state, before the monetary economy’; such ‘poor places’ are marked by isolation/lack of accessibility, severe environmental constraints, poor education and political ‘invisibility’. These factors must be considered in an understanding of the Duna’s current circumstances.

The very recent and dramatic history of colonisation and missionisation of the Duna-speaking area provides an exciting setting for a study of musical change. A number of people are still alive who can comment on their experience of encountering Western culture and its people for the first time and their impressions of learning new kinds of music alongside their indigenous ones. They can also comment first hand on the restrictions placed on their indigenous culture by the foreigners. Such primary research fuels this book—the first comprehensive study of the music of the Duna.

Review of the literature

Currently there are no substantial ethnomusicological accounts of Duna music. A doctoral thesis has been completed on the music of the Huli (Pugh-Kitingan 1981), one of the neighbouring language groups, who have been described as Duna’s ‘cultural kin’ (Gammage 1998:91), and further work from this body of research has been published (Pugh-Kitingan 1977, 1982, 1984, 1998). Vida Chenoweth is the only ethnomusicologist to have written on the Duna; however, her observations are few and taken solely from the experience and recordings made by others (Chenoweth 1969, 2000; Chenoweth and Bee 1971).

Scholars with firsthand knowledge of Duna society have made important observations of Duna performance genres, however, these are anthropological in their approach so do not attempt to describe or analyse musical structures (see, for example, Haley 2002a; Stewart and Strathern 2002a). The same can be said of most anthropological studies of musical genres, with the ‘technical requirements imposed by musical analysis’ perceived as being ‘so separate and severe’ (Said 1991:xii).

Although these existing sources describe Duna ancestral music, none of them has addressed in any detail the vibrant and important music composed in introduced styles—a more recent development in Duna music history. One of the aims of this book is to go some way in filling this gap in the literature. Alice Moyle (1961) prophetically wrote many years ago of non-indigenous or

‘contact music’ that ‘[a]s a rule, this kind of material is passed over. But as time goes on its value will become more clearly apparent.’ This has indeed happened and such material has become a focus for music research, as indicated by Denis Crowdy (1998:14): ‘The ways in which non-western countries such as PNG have incorporated the music of western cultures in the development of contemporary indigenous styles has been a significant field of discussion in ethnomusicology.’

Within ethnomusicology more generally, the literature on music and change is various and includes the earlier theoretical work by scholars such as Blacking (1977) and Kartomi (1981). A number of case studies support and develop this theoretical work, by scholars such as Kubik (1986), Waterman (1990), Manuel (1994) and Kidula (1995, 1999), to name just a few. Studies undertaken within the Pacific region have been most influential to this research. Examples include Lawson (1989), Linkels (1992), Ammann (1998), Goldsworthy (1998), Alexeyeff (2004) and Neuenfeldt and Costigan (2004), and the collected volumes edited by Moyle (1992) and Lawrence and Niles (2001). Particularly influential to my research have been the comprehensive studies of Indigenous Australian music and change by Ellis (1994, 1995), Magowan (1994a, 1994b, 2007), Corn (2002) and Toner (2003). A number of parallels between music and change in Australia and Papua New Guinea can be drawn. Ellis (1994:742) observes of Indigenous Australian music: ‘In contemporary Westernised music, many of the old concepts are maintained. Although compositions are no longer tied to tracts of land or to traditional technology, the sense of identity sought through musical expression by modern Aboriginal people is similar.’ Observations such as this parallel my own research.

Recent works of ethnomusicology in Papua New Guinea by Webb (1993) and Crowdy (2005) detail newly introduced musical practices on a national level. With this book, I intend to build on this literature on music and change by profiling a single Papua New Guinean language group. Although there already are some studies on music and change in Papua New Guinea, particularly by Feld (1988, 2001), Webb (1995) and Suwa (2001a, 2001b), these have been conducted primarily in areas of the country quite different to Kopiago and—in the case of Webb and Suwa’s research areas, which are coastal—that have a much earlier and very different history of European contact. Therefore, this book is a significant contribution to Papua New Guinean ethnomusicology. It is also timely in view of Crowdy’s (2001:153) observation:

There is...little doubt that the kinds of musical diversity [in Papua New Guinea], and their relative isolation from each other that existed even fifty years ago have changed dramatically. More importantly, the realisation that musical change has been, and will most likely continue to be the norm must be considered as a primary research perspective as the pace of change continues.

Theoretical orientation

Scholarship in the discipline of anthropology has been very influential to the formation of the theoretical framework of this research. In particular, it has shaped my thinking regarding perceived dichotomies of the ‘traditional’ and the ‘modern’—an area extensively theorised within anthropology.

Shils (1971:123) writes, “‘Tradition’ and ‘traditional’ are among the most commonly used terms in the whole vocabulary of the study of culture and society.’ The polarisation of the ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’, ‘ancestral’ and ‘contemporary’ or indeed ‘black’ and ‘white’ music is common across the board, but also in many Pacific societies, and is applied not only to music but to their societies as a whole. This is, however, largely an imposed rhetoric (see also Strathern and Stewart 2004:136–7). Zagala explains it thus:

The distinction between the ‘traditional’ and the ‘contemporary’ is not only difficult to spot within the dynamic cultures of the Pacific archipelagoes, but it is largely meaningless to Islanders themselves. They can certainly speak about this opposition, because they have learnt it from outsiders, but, in practice, tradition is not imbued with the same values of authenticity or purity that curators and ethnographers have projected onto these societies. Instead, cultural forms are generated within the rhythmic repetitions of life’s cycles, simultaneously harnessing the weight of history and reverberating into the imaginative possibilities of the future. (Zagala 2003:57)

The term ‘tradition’ can have currency in some respects. It can be used as a point of reference to a historical period. Hau’ofa (1993:3) writes: ‘In a number of Pacific societies people still divide their history into two parts: the era of darkness associated with savagery and barbarism; and the era of light and civilisation, ushered in by Christianity.’ Appadurai et al. (1991:22) write that ‘tradition is an ever-receding point of social reference. Tradition is about “pastness”.’

In terms of performance genres, the term ‘tradition’ can in some contexts be used appropriately, as Kubik (1986:53) points out: ‘That which is handed down from one generation to the next may be called a “tradition”. A new type of music invented by someone now cannot be a tradition yet. But it may become one as time passes.’ The most important thing, though, when discussing tradition in regards to performance genres is to recognise that the connotation of stasis is problematic (see, for example, Neuenfeldt and Costigan 2004:118; Dunbar-Hall and Gibson 2004:17). Change occurs within the realm of the ‘traditional’ as well as the modern: ‘tradition is dynamic, just as is culture and the people who form and transform it. It is a human construct and configuration, altered through time to create meaning for its adherents and in their world’ (Kidula 1999).

Jolly discusses the perceived dichotomy of true tradition versus inauthenticity and asks, in the case of Vanuatu cultural practice,

why shouldn't church hymns, the mass, and *Bislama* [Vanuatu's pidgin language] be seen as part of Pacific tradition, alongside pagan songs and indigenous languages²...Perhaps it is not so much that Pacific peoples are glossing over differences in an indiscriminating valorization of precolonial and colonial states of their past as that Pacific peoples are more accepting of both indigenous and exogenous elements as constituting *their* culture...it is Western commentators who are more compelled to rigidly compartmentalize indigenous and exogenous, precolonial and colonial, because they retain an exoticized and dehistoricized view of Pacific cultures. (Jolly 1992:53)

Although maintaining the dichotomy of the traditional and the modern could in some respects be considered useful—for example, it is said that the people of Papua New Guinea themselves wish to recognise a dichotomous distinction between the traditional and the modern so as to serve in the preservation of music (Niles 2001:128)—I consider this division artificial and detrimental to understanding Duna musical practices, particularly those of exogenous inspiration. Duna people do differentiate between 'traditional' and 'modern' music to a degree, as I explain below; however, this distinction is not overtly politicised as it is in other parts of Papua New Guinea (particularly the coastal areas) and island Melanesia, which have longer histories of colonisation.

Tradition, known as 'kastom' in Tok Pisin (the lingua franca spoken most widely in Papua New Guinea), has become associated with 'reinvention' in many Melanesian cultures (Keesing 1982). In this context, there is a sense that custom 'cannot afford to be invariant' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:2). This notion has affected the way in which change is discussed in music scholarship. On this, Crowdy (2001:138) writes: 'Although the idea of an unbroken musical tradition passed down through many generations has been shown to be somewhat inaccurate its characterisation in relation to non-Melanesian influence is significant in defining the extent and type of musical change.'

There has, however, always been change in tradition. Even in pre-colonial times, Pacific peoples borrowed from other sources (Jolly 1992:58–9). In music there is 'deliberateness of musical change and exchange' (Myers 1993:240). The Duna are no exception, importing and exporting rituals, dancing and music from and to the neighbouring Huli and Obena language groups (Pugh-Kitingan 1998:537). Even the term 'Duna', which they are now known by, comes from the

2 In the case of Papua New Guinea, it has already been acknowledged by some that Christianity has become 'traditional' for a large number of the population (Denoon 2005:14).

Huli term for them (the Duna term for themselves being ‘Yuna’). Such cultural relatedness is not seen as ‘inauthenticising’ Duna—in fact, it is an important element of their origin history (see the story of Mburulu Pango in Chapter 2).

I am not arguing here along the lines of Bhabha’s (1994) notion of ‘third space’ or hybrid.³ It seems inaccurate to apply a concept of hybridity here, especially if we accept Sahlins’ (1999:411) argument that ‘all cultures are hybrid’ and that the ‘dialectic of similarity and difference, of convergence of contents and divergence of schemes, is a normal mode of cultural production’. Of course, Sahlins is not alone in this opinion; Schneider (2003:217) observes too that ‘there is no “original” after all...There is, so to say, nothing *before* hybridity, in fact, the term is probably misleading, as it presupposes a transition from pure elements which, through a blending process, become impure, or hybrid...syncretism, like hybridity, presupposes an earlier non-syncretic state’. Similar views have also been stated in ethnomusicology (cf. Kartomi 1981:230). Rather than engaging with the notion of hybridity, I argue in terms of convergent traditions, traditions that are recognised as originating from certain points in time in Duna history—namely, pre-contact and contact periods.

I have chosen to label the musical styles that originate from these periods ‘ancestral’ and ‘introduced’, rather than ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’, as the former pair of terms is a more appropriate translation of the Duna terms of *awenene* and *khao*.⁴ Literally, these Duna terms refer to people: ancestors (*awenene* is related to the term *awa*, meaning ‘grandmother’, and can best be translated as ‘of the grandmother kind’)⁵ and whites (*khao*).⁶ So in my use of the terms ‘ancestral’ and ‘introduced’, abstract concepts are not invoked, but points of reference in time

3 I also do not argue within a framework of globalisation, Papua New Guinea being ‘so far at the periphery of globalization’ (Crowdy 2001:153).

4 When these qualifying terms are used, they precede the Duna terms ‘*ipakana*’ (song) and ‘*alima*’ (instrument). In Tok Pisin, these terms can be translated as ‘tumbuna’ and ‘wait’ (white). Webb (1993:95) notes that in Papua New Guinea, ‘[s]ingsing tumbuna (TP: ancestral songs) is a preferable term to the more ambiguous “traditional song,” and is also widely understood throughout Papua New Guinea to denote both pre-contact song forms and those more recently composed in pre-contact styles’. It should be noted, however, that these Duna terms, ‘*awenene*’ and ‘*khao*’, are not readily used for identification of musical items; rather, genre titles are used, as the next chapter explains, and these by definition indicate the period from whence the forms originate.

5 The Duna term for ‘grandmother’ is similar to the term for ‘father’ (*awa*). Haley (2002a:97) differentiates between the two by using an apostrophe between the two syllables for grandmother: *au’wa*. The two meanings are distinguished by pitch: *awa*, when meaning ‘father’, has a falling tone, whereas *awa*, meaning ‘grandmother’, has a rising tone (Lila San Roque, Personal communication, 5 December 2007). From the current evidence, including ‘u’ is redundant in the spelling of this word (as it is phonetically predictable), so it has not been used here. For more information on the sound system of Duna, see Cochrane and Cochrane (1966); Giles (n.d.); Summer Institute of Linguistics et. al. (2006); and San Roque (2008).

6 The word ‘*khao*’ can also be translated as ‘redskin’; it is thought that *khao* was originally used to refer to indigenous people with lighter skin but was then adapted to refer almost exclusively to white people as a cultural/ethnic group (Lila San Roque, Personal communication, 4 December 2007).

(just as I discussed earlier regarding the temporal use of the term ‘tradition’) and certain places/people of origin (inside and out). Conceived of in this way, these referents are hopefully less likely to duplicate a false dichotomy.

In this book, I initially set up an opposition of the indigenous and the exogenous in Duna musical practice as I detail their music history more or less chronologically. This opposition is systematically broken down in later chapters as I argue for continuity of Duna musical practice across the spectrum of history. As Sahlins (2000:9–10) notes, ‘in all change there is continuity’, and indigenous peoples are active agents in the process of cultural change who ‘struggle to encompass what is happening to them in the terms of their own world system’ (cf. Robbins 2005:5). O’Hanlon (1993:11) too advises not to ‘overlook the capacity of cultures creatively to select, adapt and re-contextualise external forms’. Ultimately, as Said declared:

[W]hat is impressive about musical practice in all its variety is that it takes place in many different places, for different purposes, for different constituencies and practitioners, and of course at many different times. To assemble all that, to herd it under one dialectical temporal model is—no matter how compelling or dramatic the formulation—simply an untrue and therefore insufficient account of what happens. (Said 1991:xv)

By discussing Duna songs whose styles originate from recognisably distinct historical eras alongside each other, comparing aspects of composition, content and function, I aim to reveal a striking continuity in musical practice and, in doing so, draw attention to the creativity and agency of the Duna people in harnessing their own creative expression.

Methodology

There continues to be a tension in ethnomusicology between an anthropological approach to research and a musicological one (cf. Sewald 2005; Flora 2006). Flora (2006:13) advises that researchers must ‘carefully think through where we are in a specific research project with respect to this bi-polarity—or, with respect to the continuum that naturally exists between the two poles’. This methodological approach—finding a position of convergence between two disciplines rather than adopting one over the other—embodies my theoretical orientation in relation to the study of Duna music.

In this section, I present important points regarding my research process, in more or less chronological order, beginning with the fieldwork experience and its issues, such as my gender, and certain methods of data collection, such as

photography and recording; processes undertaken during this experience, such as song translation; and processes undertaken mostly after the fieldwork experience, including song notation and writing style.

Fieldwork

Mulling over imperfect field notes, sorting through conflicting intuitions, and beset by a host of unanswered questions, the ethnographer must somehow fashion a written account that adequately conveys his or her understanding of other people's understandings...It is, to be sure, a discomfiting business in which loose ends abound and little is ever certain. But with ample time, a dollop of patience, and steady guidance from able native instructors, one does make measurable progress. (Basso 1996:57–8)

For this research, I undertook five research trips—encompassing a variety of locations in Papua New Guinea—to work with the Duna people. These trips were conducted during the years 2004–07, adding up to a period of nine months in total. In addition, I have worked with Duna people visiting Canberra on a number of occasions over these years. Although my fieldwork at Kopiago was truncated due to social and political instability in the area,⁷ I was able to make the most of these multiple field sites, both away and at home (see Gillespie 2007b), which has had the unexpected but welcome consequence of enriching my research, particularly in the area of the Duna diaspora. The existing anthropological and linguistic material made by other scholars, which included their recordings of Duna music genres, contributed significantly to my own data.

Fieldwork as a methodology has come under scrutiny in the recent past, with some scholars keen to point out the flaws of the practice. Sewald (2005:11) writes of fieldwork as 'a token of identity', which 'assures researchers and students of ethnomusicology that if they avoid the use of others' recordings and perform fieldwork they will have, on the one hand, escaped both the clutches of colonialist attitudes and comparative/historical musicology and, on the other, avoided calling into question their status as ethnomusicologists'.

She goes on to say that

there is nothing to prevent one from drawing conclusions that are unsupported by what one actually observed in the field. One could even

⁷ Of course, interruption to fieldwork due to instability in the location of research is not uncommon; many well-known ethnographies document such events and the researcher's efforts to work around such obstacles (see, for example, Keil 1979; Shelemay 1991).

argue that there is a far longer history of imperialistic and ethnocentric theories based on firsthand observation of other cultures than there is based on the analysis of others' sound recordings. (Sewald 2005:12)

Sewald's argument is concerned with promoting the use of archival material in ethnographic research, and as such has reiterated to me the value of examining others' recordings and written resources alongside my own. I have used the recordings of Peter White in my background research, as well as the recordings made by my colleagues on the research project 'Chanted Tales from Highland New Guinea: A comparative study of oral performance traditions and their role in contemporary land politics', funded by the Australian Research Council from 2003 to 2006.⁸ I have incorporated one of Modjeska's recordings into this publication (see Chapter 6, Example 6.1). These recordings have complemented and enriched my own resources.

Despite such attacks on the fieldwork method of research, it remains a key practice in ethnomusicology, as Titon writes:

[M]ost have not abandoned ethnographic fieldwork, even in the face of challenges from scholars in cultural studies and anthropology who critique its colonialist heritage and challenge the very concept of 'the field' and 'the other'. Rather, we have attempted to reform the cultural study of music based upon changing ideas of subject/object, self/other, inside/outside, field/fieldwork, author/authority, and the application of ethnomusicology in the public interest. (Titon 2003:173)

As emphasised in the few field manuals of the discipline of ethnomusicology (Herndon and McLeod 1983; Society for Ethnomusicology 1994; Barz and Cooley 1997), fieldwork is for the researcher a deeply personal process, 'an individual experience' (Noll 1997:163). My initial fieldwork at Kopiago was conducted alongside anthropologist Nicole Haley and my second visit there (which represented the bulk of my time 'on location') was in the company of linguist and fellow postgraduate student Lila San Roque. These extra-disciplinary influences in part account for the emphasis on song texts in my own research and for some of the techniques in gathering data—in particular, conducting interviews and undertaking translation work—which I developed from working with them as well.

The recording of musical practices was the fundamental building block for my field research. To this end, I used born-digital media: a Marantz PM670 solid-state recorder with Rode NT4 stereo microphone. Sound files were created as uncompressed Pulse Code Modulation (PCM) and stored as .wav files. Ideally, these were made at the higher end of available sampling rates (usually 44.1

8 Information on this project can be found at <<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/anthropology/chantedtales>>

kHz), providing the highest quality. As Feld (in Feld and Brenneis 2004:470–1) points out, it is very important for researchers working in sound to pay the utmost attention to the quality of their sound creations. Such high settings proved problematic in the field, however, when the ability to download the digital files was compromised; I had taken a laptop computer into the field on which to download these files and free up space for more recordings, however, it was soon discovered that the existing solar panel facility with which to charge electronic equipment was not compatible with that computer. Some sound files were therefore recorded at a lesser quality in order to minimise the digital storage space they would occupy, ensuring that opportunities to record and store other performances were not missed. Regarding recording quality, it should be noted too that although a high standard of recording was always the goal, the many and varied recording situations brought with them equally as many varied recording conditions, indoors and outdoors, with sometimes unexpected levels of performer participation, which affected some of the recordings. In order to have as many examples as possible represented in sound, I have included all recordings of the songs I discuss on the corresponding website (<http://epress.anu.edu.au/steepslopes/media.html>), despite this varying quality.

Recording as a method of data collection is not without its problems; Knopoff (2004) points out that recordings can be intrusive and can affect the understanding and perceptions of music. I have endeavoured to work around this by contextualising most of the performances/recordings as I discuss them individually. On several occasions, the performances I recorded were out of their typical context: sometimes I elicited performances, but far more frequently people would approach me and offer to sing or play certain things. This was not surprising, as the precedence of gain (in-kind or monetary) for performances or other collaborative efforts with researchers was well established. I was not selective with material presented for recording, but recorded all that was offered. On occasion, I recorded moments without the performer's knowledge of it, as seeking permission during such times (for example, at a time of mourning) would have been inappropriate. On these few occasions, I always consulted afterwards with the performers, making it known to them that I had recorded them, and later working with them on the translations.

In my field research, I aimed to obtain a translation of Duna song texts into Tok Pisin (the language in which I conducted most of my research) as soon after a recording as possible, with the performer, in a playback of the recording. The extent to which this could be undertaken depended largely on the performer's ability in Tok Pisin: sometimes it would consist only of a straightforward reciting of the text.⁹ Often a second person would be employed to assist in the

⁹ Tok Pisin is spoken by the majority, but with fluency by those Duna who worked with or were educated by the colonial administration in the period from the early 1960s to the late 1970s or those who have travelled

translation, usually a person who was present during the recording and one who had experience in translating for other researchers previously. The people who are the best performers are not necessarily best at translation or explanation, as Barwick recognises in regard to Indigenous Australian song:

Even for performers, it may be difficult to decipher, translate or explain the song texts, which are at best cryptic references to particular events in the ancestral journey, and often use archaic language, or even words from neighbouring or distant languages that may not normally be spoken by the performers...[song owners] may reveal different aspects and levels of meaning about a text to different people. The explanations given may depend on the perceived level of understanding of the person being instructed as well as on the knowledge of the person doing the explaining...It is not appropriate to postulate a single fixed 'meaning' of the song text; it is rather a matter for negotiation and even contestation. (Barwick 1990:64–5)

It was a practice of mine to photograph each of the performers whom I had recorded. Photographing in the field, as in recording and other more general fieldwork activities, requires one to consciously operate in another cultural framework. This was most apparent during times of death and grieving for the Duna—a prominent part of my fieldwork experience at Kapiago (see Chapter 4). At funerals in my own cultural context, photography would be considered inappropriate; however, it is accepted—even encouraged—to take photographs at Duna funerals. Even photographs of the corpse are sometimes requested, especially if the surviving family does not have a photograph of the deceased. Lawrence (1995) recounts an experience of attending a funeral in the Cook Islands where locals reprimanded her for not taking photographs during the service. Her story clearly illustrates the need to step outside one's cultural framework and contribute to the community on their own terms.

Toner (2003:71) writes that 'ethnomusicological research methods must be driven in large part by what our interlocutors tell us is important about their music'. As Hannerz (1997:15) observes, however: 'It could hardly be that if people do not think of [their] culture as "flowing"...they should be allowed to veto those of our analytical, or at least proto-analytical, notions which suggest otherwise.' A happy medium should therefore be the goal:

In the ethnomusicological investigation of any musical phenomenon, we should strive for a dialogue between two discourses: the one derived from our analyses of the music in question; and the other derived from

outside the Duna-speaking area. Generally, those fluent in Tok Pisin are in the age bracket from twenty to sixty years and predominantly are male (women are not generally encouraged to work outside their home community, be educated very highly or travel very far).

what our interlocutors in the field tell us about the music in question. Neither discourse taken on its own is entirely satisfactory...Like all good ethnography, ethnomusicological investigation should be a kind of hermeneutic circle: our analyses of musical structure allow us to develop a certain kind of knowledge about the music; that knowledge leads us to ask our interlocutors certain kinds of questions about musical meaning; that knowledge of musical meaning then leads to further analyses of musical structure; and so on. (Toner 2003:73)

The Duna language is spoken in about 90 parishes (Haley 2002a:15),¹⁰ but this book will focus on the music of the parish of Hirane, where I lived during my fieldwork at Kopiago. On arrival at Kopiago, I had planned to travel widely in the Duna-speaking area; however, the opportunity did not arise (travelling alone in the area would have been inappropriate and unsafe and engaging escorts a considerable disruption to the lives of my Duna friends). Although this was initially disappointing, Kopiago is a relatively major hub for the Duna, with one of the few airstrips in the area and the semblance of a road, so the limitation on my own movement was somewhat mitigated by the movements of others to and from other Duna locales and beyond. What was most beneficial, though, was that my very local existence at Kopiago meant that I developed a very local perspective for my research into musical practices, and my relationships with the Duna people I lived and worked with were the richer for this. The individuals with whom I spent the most time are foregrounded in this book and the manner in which I do this is discussed later in this chapter.

Schieffelin and Crittenden (1991:viii) observe: 'It is in the nature of field research that ethnographers become emotionally involved with the people they study, become their advocates, and establish a certain moral solidarity with them.' This involvement can in fact be beneficial to the research process; as Cesara (1982:9), the pseudonym for Karla Poewe, writes: 'being objective, emotional, personal, and cultural all at once is not dangerous nor detrimental to social analysis... instead, it may be a potent combination adding to an enriched understanding of self and other.' As researchers and human beings, we are subjective and it is best that this subjectivity be made as transparent as possible in the research we make available to others. This has been one of the more recent goals of ethnomusicological fieldwork: fostering empathy, which 'not only thickens the description through dialogue, it also introduces the subjectivities of emotion and reflexivity...empathy does not mean standing in the other person's shoes (feeling his pain) as much as it means engagement' (Titon 2003:177).

A particular kind of engagement has come about through my gender as a female researcher. Kaeppler (1998:241) has written that 'studies of music in Oceania

10 The concept of a parish is defined and discussed in Chapter 5.

have mostly been carried out by male researchers, who have had access mainly to male rituals and interpretations. Recent studies by female researchers have added missing pieces.' These missing pieces are essential if the discipline is to successfully achieve the aim of placing music 'within the social matrix of the people who create and produce it...[and] document the totality of that social matrix' (Herndon and Ziegler 1990:9).

I have been able to access both male and female spheres of Duna musical performance. Gender in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea is significantly delineated, which will become apparent as this book progresses, and this affects all aspects of life, including musical performance. Being a female of another culture working often with Papua New Guinean males has allowed me access to men's performance practices; however, my femaleness gives me more access to women's networks than a visiting male would have. For example, when Modjeska conducted his research with the Duna in the 1960s and 1970s, he could make only the following cursory remark regarding women's performance (admittedly though, song was not his area of research): 'Except for mourning laments and tuneless ditties sung while gardening or walking home in the rain, Duna women do not really sing at all' (Modjeska 1977:332).¹¹ Although the musical landscape has changed somewhat in the 30 years since this statement (cf. Strathern and Stewart 2005:12), I believe women play as great a part in Duna musical practice as men, they just perform different genres, and genres that are less public, calling for less of a 'performer–audience' relationship. One could argue that my gender as a woman plays a role in ensuring a balance, and inclusivity, to my research.¹²

Writing style

Bohlman (1992:132) writes: 'Musical ethnography should represent the musical moment, the creator of that moment, and the indigenous meaning of that moment.' I aim to give individual Duna collaborators and performers the spotlight as much as possible, allowing them to tell their own stories and sing their own songs. This is to provide not so much a truer account—'[e]thnographic truths are...inherently *partial*—committed and incomplete' (Clifford 1986:7)—but space for the reader to develop their own engagement with the material. Titon (2003:178) points out that

the ethnographic writer selects, from among the many statements by the many voices, what will be included in the ethnographic account. But

¹¹ Jim Taylor made a similar observation of the women of the Huli language group, the Duna's 'cultural kin' (Gammage 1998:91), stating that '[t]hey do not sing' (Taylor in Gammage 1998:199).

¹² In a recent review (Gillespie 2008) and also in a recent book chapter (Gillespie 2009), I detail the absence of, and the need for, female ethnomusicologists working in Papua New Guinea.

when the multiply voiced texts are on display, they offer the reader far more interpretative possibilities than are present when the interpretation comes through the inflection of a single voice.

The decision to present particular individuals almost as characters in this book was inspired by recent scholarship in ethnomusicology highlighting the importance of the individual (see, for example, Stock 2001)—a turn that some consider to have begun with comments made by Nettl in 1983 (Nettl 1983:283; Slawek 1993:161). Other disciplines have also drawn attention to the importance of the individual. It is important to note here that there is significant debate within Melanesian anthropology regarding the concept of the ‘individual’. There is currently a feeling of strong opposition by many scholars towards applying a Western notion of ‘the individual’ to Melanesian societies; rather, a person should be considered a ‘dividual’—that is, relationally constituted (I discuss this again in Chapter 7). In using the term ‘individual’ here, I claim neither opposing position but rather believe that many of the songs of the people in question reveal aspects of both: an individual person as conceived of in Western thought, but also a person who is defined largely by their relationships with others.

In my efforts to represent each Duna person, I have included their own words as much as possible. This has resulted in reasonable lengths of interview text given in Tok Pisin followed by an English translation. In the text here, I have presented Tok Pisin terms in quotation marks and Duna terms in italics. In song texts, I have differentiated between Tok Pisin and Duna in a similar way—only the Duna is in italics, while the Tok Pisin is in normal type.

Some of the process of forming song translations in the field has already been discussed. In this the final product, I have chosen to show my translations in English only, without linguistic annotations, for the sake of clarity of understanding. Some scholars in their translations show as much information on the actual indigenous terms as possible through extensive annotations—a process Leavitt (2006) calls ‘thick translation’, evoking Geertz’s (1973) ‘thick description’. Leavitt (2006:98) defines ‘thickness’ as ‘the presence or absence of layers of information from the source text carried over into the target text’. As he points out though, ‘thickening’ can occur by providing information in the text surrounding the central piece of translation. This has been my approach—aiming for a literal translation and then detailing this with an explanation outside the translation, which provides the additional information and context. Translation is a process of compromise and any result, no matter how well presented, cannot be perfect.

In a similar fashion, song transcription is also unsatisfactory in terms of a stand-alone, accurate representation of a cultural product. As Knopoff (2003:39–40)

accounts, ‘ethnomusicologists have come to realise that our analytic tools and methods are neither objective nor value-free’ and, as a result, ‘a significant cross-section of ethnomusicologists has abandoned analysis as a primary means of addressing important issues about music and culture’.

The problems with Western notation for non-Western musical traditions (and even Western ones) were identified relatively early in the history of ethnomusicology (see, for example, England et al. 1964). Not only are scholars already compromised in trying to represent often oral cultures in a written form, but the conventional system of notation is recognised as being very restricted, particularly in terms of representing pitch (List 1974:353), tone quality (Seeger 1987:102) and rhythm (List 1974:368; Kartomi 1990; Spearitt 1984). This has resulted in a number of scholars designing alternative systems of notation in an attempt to better represent the music they are studying (see, for example, Toner 2003). Notations created by an ethnomusicologist should be considered not as exhaustive representations of a musical creation but as graphic representations of certain aspects of the creation of interest to the scholar themselves. When taken this way, ‘a lack of total accuracy in transcription is not problematic as long as the particular features the analyst wishes to consider are rendered accurately’ (Knopoff 2003:44).

Transcription is also an important analytical process for the development of a scholar’s insight. Barwick (1990:60) writes that ‘analysis is a process of understanding rather than a methodology for producing “truth”’. This process is a complement to any indigenous knowledge available to the scholar: ‘Careful musical transcription can reveal aspects of the performance that native categories do not highlight. A good musical transcription can raise many questions. These questions may or may not lead to a greater understanding of the music, but they are usually worth asking’ (Seeger 1987:102). And, as Knopoff (2003:46) put it, ‘[s]tatements about the music by performers or other cultural insiders are of great importance but cannot in themselves generate the most insightful analyses’.

The transcriptions in this book are only an approximation of the performance. These transcriptions are most helpful in showing phrasing and melodic contours and the relationship of these to song text. In particular, it should be pointed out that pitch is not as fixed as it appears in these transcriptions. Duna music generally features much sliding up to and down from pitches—this occurs in both ancestral and newly introduced styles of music. It is also important to note that the assigned rhythms, where used, are not entirely accurate in these transcriptions—Duna ancestral music is largely un-metered and this characteristic is often another aspect of musical continuity apparent in compositions of exogenous origin.

The musical transcriptions that have found their way into this book have done so because they are essential to the illustration of certain points. Transcriptions are not included merely as a matter of course; where songs are discussed purely for their lyrical content or structure (and there are many of those, especially in the later chapters), musical transcriptions have not been provided, as they would be superfluous to the argument. Most musical examples (indicated by the symbol ►) discussed are, however, provided on the corresponding website (<http://epress.anu.edu.au/steepslopes/media.html>). Ideally, the reader will access these sound files as the songs are discussed.

Structure

The constraints and conventions of writing necessitate a linear structure, when often it is more beneficial to conceive of separate sections of writing as parallel texts (Morphy 1991:8). Certainly that is the case with this book. The chapters appear in terms of song topics and functions; however, as reading of the book progresses, it will become apparent how much these separate chapters connect with and feed into each other. Still, I conform to the required linear structure and, within this, aim to make these connections apparent.

This chapter has given an outline of the project at hand: its aims, the background literature informing it, the theories and methodologies employed and the presentation of the material. Chapters 2 and 3 complement each other, providing a comprehensive outline of the totality of Duna musical practice in somewhat of a chronological order. Chapter 2 defines ancestral Duna musical practice. It explains the Duna's conception of the origins of musical difference and the role of the musician in Duna society and presents essential Duna musical structures and Duna vocabulary surrounding music. We see the Duna group song as a separate category to instrumental performance and the genres within both categories are listed and described. A brief consideration is given to the category of dance, but it emerges that the priority—for the Duna and for this book—rests on the category of song (*ipakana*). The nature of Duna verbs referring to kinds of sound production is seen to reinforce these categories as distinct. Language features of Duna song are identified, these being *kēiyaka* (a specialised vocabulary here translated as 'praise names'), repetition and metaphor.

Chapter 3 looks at music introduced to the Duna through colonial and mission history. These encounters are outlined in more detail than has been done in the early pages of this chapter. We learn of past and present efforts to circumscribe performances of ancestral traditions through certain interpretations of Christianity. The musical influences of colonisation and missionisation are shown to come together in a contemporary song format and this is illustrated

by the analysis of, first, a popular Christian song, and then a number of recently composed songs on secular themes relevant to the Duna, particularly those of local politics. The vocabulary for these introduced song styles is also presented here. We begin to see here how creativity is harnessed by the Duna, not only to articulate social concerns but also to effect change.

The next three chapters change in register, focusing on the ethnographic. Chapter 4 recounts the death of the young woman Wakili Akuri, and the songs resulting from it. The importance of the lament in the Duna (and Papua New Guinean) musical soundscape is emphasised in this chapter. A number of individuals and their songs are presented; however, the chapter focuses in particular on the songs of Kipu Piero—the lament she sang directly after Wakili's death and a number of guitar-based (and church-inspired) lamentations composed some time afterwards. The comparison of these songs reveals a certain continuity, particularly in the phrasing of the texts and their content.

The study of Duna laments in Chapter 4 reveals the importance of land to the Duna. Chapter 5 examines how Duna people sing about their relationship to land, continuing the focus on song text analysis. It is proposed that Duna people identify with place in a number of ways and that these can be classified into four frames: national, regional, local and parish. The focus, for the most part of the chapter, is on the permeability and multiplicity of these categories. I look more closely at the phenomena of *kēiyaka* and how that functions in Duna song of both ancestral and introduced origin. Place as a site for food production (good or poor) is discussed, and the function of the negative in song is touched on (to be explored further in Chapter 6). I then consider how Duna song can illustrate moving through a landscape, incorporating places and modes of transport associated with the modern world. This brings forward the topic of Duna diasporic communities and the songs they sing about the experience of being away and at home.

A colleague once noted from my research that all Duna songs seemed to be about food and sex (Paul Pickering, Personal communication, 23 October 2006). Chapter 6 takes in hand the subject of courting, which has appeared in so many songs of the preceding chapters. I present ancestral courting songs sung for the new contexts of social commentary and politics. I consider both new and old courting practices as illustrated, and enacted, in new song styles. The role of eliciting sympathy in song through expressions of self-denigration (as briefly visited in Chapter 5) is discussed and is shown to be one of many aspects of continuity in Duna courting songs. The connection between courting and death is also accounted for as I revisit Wakili's death and analyse another of Kipu Piero's laments.

Chapter 7 takes us both back and forward. First, the very beginnings of the creative process are examined and we see more clearly the textual and musical elements of continuity in Duna songs, at the point of composition. Authorship and ownership (or lack thereof) with regard to song are addressed, as is individual agency and the effect this might have on any preservation endeavours. The role of politics and cultural shows in efforts to present and preserve ancestral performance genres is assessed, as is the ideal of education programs, both within schools and within revived ancestral rituals. Anxieties expressed for the future, particularly by the younger generation of males, are given voice here.

Chapter 8 concludes this book, giving an overview of the theoretical position and the way that each chapter has supported the argument of musical continuity. It emphasises the creativity and agency of the Duna people in music, in response to their rapidly changing world.

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